



UNITED STATES SENATE  
**REPUBLICAN  
POLICY COMMITTEE**

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**Replacing “Mutual Assured Destruction” with Mutual Cooperation**

**U.S. Withdraws from Obsolete  
1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty**

An obsolete Cold-War-era relic has been put to rest as President George W. Bush today gave formal notice to Russia that the United States will withdraw from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, as provided for under the treaty’s Article XV. This is a decision both wise and popular with a strong majority of Americans — 70 percent — who now believe the United States should build missile defenses [Gallup, 10/01].

At the White House this morning, the President declared:

“Today, as the events of September 11 made all too clear, the greatest threats to both our countries come not from each other or other big powers in the world, but from terrorists who strike without warning or rogue states who seek weapons of mass destruction. We know that the terrorists and some of those who support them seek the ability to deliver death and destruction to our doorstep via missiles. And we must have the freedom and flexibility to develop effective defenses against those attacks.

“Defending the American people is my highest priority as commander-in-chief, and I cannot and will not allow the United States to remain in a treaty that prevents us from developing effective defenses.” [transcript provided by the *Associated Press*, 12/13/01]

The President’s position advances a forward-looking defense policy, based on a new strategic framework with Russia that addresses today’s threats, reaffirms new friendships, and helps move Washington and Moscow beyond Cold War arrangements that perpetuate mistrust and antagonism. The move is predicated on replacing the Cold War construct of Mutual Assured Destruction — “the grim theory [ ] that neither side would launch a nuclear attack because it knew the other would respond, thereby destroying both” — with mutual cooperation.

**The Right Time to Withdraw from the ABM Treaty**

President Bush’s declaration to withdraw from the ABM treaty is the right decision at the right time. The purpose of the ABM Treaty was to enhance U.S. security during the Cold War at a time when the United States faced thousands of intercontinental ballistic missiles from a single threat — the Soviet Union. And while that nation was intent on dominating the West, it also was rational enough to be

deterred. While this superpower threat no longer exists, the vestiges of the superpower relationship live on through the ABM Treaty.

The ABM Treaty makes the United States completely vulnerable to new threats of the post-Cold War era by prohibiting the United States from deploying effective missile defenses. In fact, the ABM Treaty is incompatible with the deployment of effective missile defenses. Article I of the Treaty explicitly prohibits a nationwide defense of our territory from missile attack, or a basis for one. Under the terms of the ABM Treaty, the United States could deploy missile interceptors to defend a missile field in North Dakota — to ensure each side had a retaliatory option. While this was consistent with the MAD doctrine and the Cold War era, it is completely insufficient for the threats of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

All of these facts support the President's decision to withdraw from the 30-year old ABM Treaty:

- The Cold War is over and the USSR has vanished;
- The United States now faces, or will face soon, nuclear missile threats; many are from “rogue states” led by dictators who are less likely to be deterred, and more difficult to be targeted, by U.S. strategic forces;
- Proliferation of weapons of mass destruction continues apace: in 1972, the United States knew of only five countries that had nuclear weapons. Today, we know of 12 with nuclear weapons programs. In 1972, we knew of a total of nine countries that had ballistic missiles. Today, we know of 28, according to Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz [*The Financial Times, London, 7/13/01*].
- Ballistic missile defenses have been proven to be technologically feasible, as evidenced by the most recent successful hit-to-kill test conducted in early December of this year. It is now time to move forward in testing the most promising technologies.

## **Treaty Has Been an Obstacle to Defending America**

Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz in July of this year summed up how, over the past 10 years, U.S. security has been subordinated to outdated Cold War arms control treaties despite the real and growing ballistic missile threat:

“... The intermediate-range missile threat is here now, and the long-range threat to American cities is just over the horizon — a matter of years, not decades away — and our people and our territory are defenseless.

“Why? The answer to that question has four letters: A-B-M T (ABM Treaty). For the past decade, our government has not taken seriously the challenge of developing defenses against missiles. We have not adequately funded it, we have not believed in it, and we have given the ABM Treaty priority over it. That is not how this country behaves when

we're serious about a problem" [testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, 7/12/01].

Recently the Administration even voluntarily restricted its testing program because certain tests could have raised questions over U.S. compliance with the Treaty. Because the Administration refuses to violate the Treaty, or even have its compliance with it questioned, it voluntarily passed up the chance in October of this year to conduct testing the Navy's Aegis tracking radar against long-range missiles.

The ABM Treaty prevents the United States from testing, developing, and deploying effective ballistic missile defenses, including many of the most promising missile defense technologies and basing modes. For example:

- Article V prohibits the development, testing, and deployment of ABM systems and components which are sea-based, air-based, space-based, or mobile land-based;
- Article VI prohibits giving ABM capability to non-ABM systems or components. It bans the development, testing, and deployment of "theater defenses" to give them capability to counter longer-range strategic missiles; and
- Article IX prevents us from sharing and working on defenses against longer-range missiles with our allies.

But apart from these development and testing issues, the ABM Treaty also undermines U.S. security because it:

- Prohibits deployment of ground-based interceptors and construction of an ABM radar in Alaska;
- Prohibits the use of sea-based interceptors and radars aboard Aegis or other ships against long-range strategic missiles;
- Bans the construction of an ABM radar on a ship or barge to support ground- or sea-based interceptors;
- Prohibits space-based ABM sensors; and
- Would permit the Airborne Laser to shoot down shorter-range missiles like the North Korean No Dong but may well prohibit the capability to down longer-range missiles like the Taepo Dong, which has demonstrated the capability to strike the Continental United States.

## **Moving Beyond the Treaty to Defend America**

The United States is already a decade behind: as debates over the existence of a threat displaced efforts to defend Americans, other nations were busy acquiring, developing, and proliferating missile technology. In response, the Bush Administration has designed a program to develop the most capable defense for our country, our allies, and our deployed forces, at the earliest feasible time.

Given the restrictions that the ABM Treaty imposes on the ballistic missile defense program and testing, and the evolving threats from rogue states that the intelligence community anticipates will mature by 2005, the United States has no option but to withdraw now in order to have a limited defense system in place before the time any rogue nation could do us harm. For instance, without the constraints of the ABM Treaty, the United States could, by the summer of 2002, begin construction of the radar site and launch silos in Alaska that are critical to defending against threats from North Korea, during the limited “fair weather” construction time available in the summer. Free of ABM Treaty restrictions, the United States also could begin testing ground-based and ship-based radars to track and target ballistic missiles, and could begin testing naval and airborne systems to intercept ballistic missiles, all of which are forbidden by the ABM Treaty.

The most recent test, conducted on December 3, once again proved the hit-to-kill technology for ballistic missile defense. It is time to move forward in conducting more complex tests, which would require moving beyond the ABM Treaty.

## **A New View of Deterrence . . . to Include Missile Defense**

The ABM Treaty, if left in place, would leave the United States dangerously bound to a strategy of vulnerability and assured destruction in a world that has grown more complex and dangerous. Despite the arms control agreements of the past 25 years, the number of countries with nuclear weapons programs is believed to have doubled (notwithstanding the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty), the number of countries with ballistic missile programs have tripled, and nearly a dozen countries continue to pursue offensive biological weapons programs (notwithstanding the Biological Weapons Convention).

The United States now will be able to update its concept of deterrence to reflect the realities of the current security environment, which includes weapons of mass destruction in the hands of some of the world’s least responsible and most hostile states. These rogue states are led by unpredictable dictators who frequently use terror and intimidation to achieve their ends. They place great value in possessing even a small number of long-range missiles, and view them as a means to deter us — through blackmail — from coming to the assistance of our friends and allies in vital regions of interest. As such, while a nuclear missile strike is the most dangerous threat, the more likely prospect is that the United States will be blackmailed and intimidated by these tyrants.

Deterrence alone is no longer an effective strategy. Rather, the United States also must be prepared to defend itself from these new threats, which is why the President has rightly announced his plan to “move beyond the ABM Treaty” and deploy an effective missile defense system that will protect the

United States and its allies. In the process, we may also deter those who aspire to gain weapons of mass destruction from pursuing costly and time-consuming programs to build these horrible weapons in the first place.

## **Opportunity for a New Relationship with Russia**

The ABM Treaty represents the adversarial relationship between the United States and Soviet Union of the Cold War era. Now, the President envisions an era of cooperation, and his decision to withdraw from the ABM Treaty is just one aspect of a broader strategic framework designed to foster more positive relations with Russia. This framework combines the pursuit of limited missile defenses with unilateral reductions in the U.S. nuclear arsenal to levels of between 1,700 and 2,200 operationally deployed strategic nuclear weapons.

In November of this year, Presidents Bush and Putin met in Washington, D.C., and in Crawford, Texas, for a three-day summit to discuss a wide range of issues. Appearing before pupils at Crawford High School, President Putin provided an answer to a student's question regarding the ABM Treaty: he noted that while the two countries might differ in their means for reaching the same objective, "one can rest assured that whatever final solution is found, it will not threaten or put to threat the interests of both our countries and the world" [*San Antonio Express-News*, 11/16/01]. This response was underscored more recently by Russian officials who have stated the American secession from the ABM Treaty would not exacerbate bilateral relations. According to a key Russian legislator, Moscow will take the news calmly, "without hysteria" [Mikhail Margelov, Chairman of the Russian Federation Council's International Relations Committee, *FBIS*, 12/13/01].

President Putin himself seems to acknowledge that the limited nature of the missile defense system envisioned for deployment, designed to intercept the handful of missiles that could be launched by rogue nations, will not threaten Russia's own strategic nuclear arsenal. In early December, President Putin declared that "the implementation of the plans, which the U.S. administration has announced, will in no way jeopardise [sic] the security of Russia itself, at least within the next decade" [*ITAR-TASS News Agency*, 12/5/01].

## **The Logic is Simple: Defend America**

If the reasons for moving beyond the ABM Treaty weren't clear enough before the terrorist attacks of September 11, they are certainly clear today. As Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld declared in October:

"Last month, terrorists took civilian airliners and turned them into missiles, killing thousands. If they had ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction capable of killing hundreds of thousands, I don't think anyone can doubt but that they would have willingly used them [*Pentagon briefing*, 10/25/01].

The ABM Treaty has restricted the United States from defending Americans for too long; President Bush's decision to move beyond the ABM Treaty is the right policy for a new era.

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